



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

73285

OST-99-6410-47

OST-99-6410

January 10, 2000

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

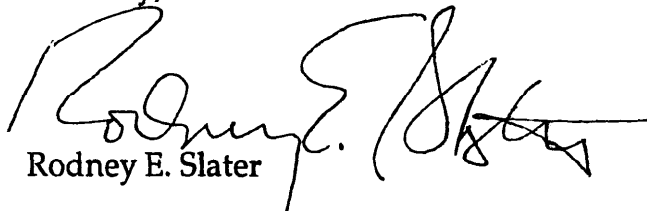
Dear Senator McConnell:

Thank you for your letter of December 6, 1999, enclosing copies of correspondence from constituents of yours who are owners of travel agencies. The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) has recently filed a formal complaint (Docket OST-99-6410) with this Department against a number of airlines. ASTA alleges that in cutting the commissions that they pay travel agents, the airlines are engaging in unfair practices and unfair methods of competition in violation of 49 U.S.C. §41712, and your constituents agree.

The airlines filed their responses to ASTA's complaint on December 10. It is now up to our Enforcement Office to review the complaint and responses and determine whether, under our statute, the complaint should be pursued or dismissed. Under these circumstances, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the substance of your constituents' letters. Your staff and your constituents can track the pleadings as well as the Department's actions through our Dockets web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Clicking on "search" and then typing "6410" in the space for the docket number and again clicking on "search" will bring up a list of all documents in the docket. Each item can be opened.

The Department's *ex parte* rules, 14 CFR Part 300, require that I place your letter, your constituents' letters, and a copy of this reply in Docket OST-99-6410.

Sincerely,

  
Rodney E. Slater

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
DOCKETS  
00 FEB 29 PM 4:53

MITCH McCONNELL  
KENTUCKY

361-A RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1702  
(202) 224-2541

## United States Senate

COMMITTEES,  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION. CHAIRMAN  
AGRICULTURE  
APPROPRIATIONS  
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
FOREIGN OPERATIONS



December 6, 1999

The Honorable Rodney Slater  
Secretary  
U. S. Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Slater:

I am writing on behalf several constituents who have concerned me regarding the American Society of Travel Agents' complaint against airline unfair practices. I would appreciate your review of their concerns.

I have enclosed copies of their correspondence, for your information. Please direct any inquiries and all relevant information to Allison Hiltz, in my Washington D.C. office.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance. I will look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

MITCH McCONNELL  
UNITED STATES SENATOR

MM/alh

Enclosures



The Stars Are The Limit  
*Galaxy Travel*

100 Cathedral Manor, Suite 102B  
Bardstown, KY 40004

Office 1-502-348-8687 . Fax 502-349-0287

November 19, 1999

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
U. S. Senate  
Washington, D. D. 20510

Dear Senator:

Please save my business from unfair competition by the airlines by writing to the Secretary of Transportation and ask him to act favorably upon the American Society of Travel Agents' (ASTA) complaint against airline unfair practices.

ASTA'S filing requests the Secretary to use his authority to stop the unfair methods of competition the airlines are using to force travel agencies out of business. The airlines have driven travel agent compensation below the cost of doing business, while also creating a "cost squeeze" that drives up agents' cost with unnecessary and anticompetitive restrictions.

My small business continues to provide consumers with the last, best hope for getting neutral, professional information and advice about travel service options. If the airlines, succeed, consumers will pay more. On behalf of my clients and employees, we thank you for contacting the Secretary and notifying me or my trade association, ASTA, at 703-739-6842 of your action.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



## BUSINESS TRAVEL SERVICES, INC.

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Suite G112 National City Tower  
101 South 5th St.  
Louisville, Kentucky 40202  
(502) 589-3765

November 10, 1999

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

Please help me protect my business from unfair airline competition practices. I would like for you to write the Secretary of Transportation and ask him to act favorably upon the American Society of Travel Agents' (ASTA) complaint against unfair airline practices.

ASTA's filing requests the Secretary to use his authority to stop the unfair methods of competition the airlines are using to force travel agencies out of business. The airlines have driven travel agent compensation below the cost of doing business, while also creating a "cost squeeze" that drives up agents' costs with unnecessary and noncompetitive restrictions.

My business continues to provide consumers with the best resource to receive neutral, unbiased information and advice about travel service options. If the airlines succeed, consumers will pay more for less service. On behalf of my clients and employees, we thank you for contacting the Secretary and notifying my trade association, ASTA, at 703-739-6842 of your action. I can be reached at the address or phone number above and would appreciate a response.

Sincerely,

  
Brenda Brown  
President

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Author: Senator at McConnell-DC

Date: 11/15/99 4:44 PM

Normal

TO: Allison Hiltz

Subject:

----- Message Contents

THE HONORABLE MITCH MCCONNELL

U.S.SENATE

WASHINGTON, D C. 20510

DEAR SENATOR,

PLEASE SAVE MY BUSINESS FROM AIRLINE UNFAIR COMPETITION BY WRITING TO THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION AND ASK HIM TO ACT FAVORABLY UPON THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TRAVEL AGENTS (ASTA) COMPLAINT AGAINST AIRLINE UNFAIR PRACTICES.

ASTAS'S FILING REQUESTS THE SECRETARY TO USE HIS AUTHORITY TO STOP THE UNFAIR METHODS OF COMPETITION THE AIRLINES ARE USING TO FORCE TRAVEL AGENCIES OUT OF BUSINESS. THE AIRLINES **HAVE DRIVEN** TRAVEL AGENT COMPENSATION BELOW THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS, WHILE ALSO CREATING A "COST SQUEEZE" THAT DRIVES UP AGENTS COSTS WITH UN-NECESSARY AND ANTICOMPETITIVE RESTRICTIONS.

MY SMALL BUSINESS CONTINUES TO PROVIDE CONSUMERS WITH THE LAST, BEST HOPE FOR GETTING NEUTRAL, PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION AND ADVICE ABOUT TRAVEL OPTIONS. IF THE AIRLINES SUCCEED, CONSUMERS WILL PAY MORE. ON BEHALF OF MY CLIENTS AND EMPLOYEES, WE THANK YOU FOR CONTACTING THE SECRETARY AND NOTIFYING ME OR MY TRADE ASSOCIATION, **ASTA**, AT 703 739-6842 OF YOUR ACTION.

LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU SOON.

SINCERELY,

NOUVEAU TRAVEL

MS. ARTY ESTES

OWNER/MANAGER

445 A SOUTH ASHLAND AVE.

LEXINGTON, KY. 40502

606 266-0006B

606 266-9173FAX

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Author: Senator at McConnell-DC

Date: 11/15/99 4:44 PM

Normal

TO: Allison Hiltz

Subject: Secretary of Transportation

----- Message Contents

November 101, 1999

The Honorable

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell,

Please save my business from airline **unfai** competition by writing to the Secretary of Transportation and ask him to act favorably upon the American society of Travel **Agents'** (ASTA) complaint against airline unfair practices.

ASTA's filing requests the Secretary to use his authority to stop unfair methods of competition the airlines are using to force travel agencies out of business. The airlines have driven travel agent compensaton below the cost of doing business, while also creating a "cost squeeze" that drives up agents' cost with unnecessary and anicompetitive restrctions.

My small business continues to provide consumers with the last, best hope for getting neutral, **pofessional** information and advice about travel **service** options. If the airlines succeed, consumers will pay more. On behalf of my clients and employees, we thank you for contacting the Secretary and notifying me or my **rade** association , **ASTA**, at 703-739-6842 of your action.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Mary Lou Boal

total Travel Service

Madisonville, KY 42431